

## Open Access to Maternity Triage – Standard Operating Procedure

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<b>Scope:</b>	Maternity Services	

Powys Teaching Health Board is the operational name of Powys Teaching Local Health Board  
Bwrdd Iechyd Addysgu Powys yw enw gweithredol Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Addysgu Powys

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## **1.0 Scope**

This SOP outlines the procedures for providing timely, safe, and equitable access to triage services for women who:

- Do not speak English, or
- Require support in British Sign Language (BSL).

The aim is to ensure effective communication, informed decision-making, and appropriate care planning to ensure barriers are removed for women to access maternity care.

## **2.0 Introduction**

The Open Access to Maternity Triage System is a project under the MatNeoSSP initiative, scheduled for implementation across all health boards in Wales in 2026. This system has been developed to address the significant barriers that some women face when accessing maternity and neonatal services, particularly those who do not speak English or who require British Sign Language (BSL) support.

Traditionally, women may have needed to contact services by phone before attending triage, which can present challenges for individuals with limited English proficiency or communication needs. The Open Access to Maternity Triage System removes this barrier, offering direct, open access to triage services without the requirement to telephone in advance. By doing so, the system promotes equitable access, ensuring that all women can receive timely assessment and care regardless of language or communication ability.

In summary, the Open Access to Maternity Triage System represents a significant step towards inclusive, patient-centered care, removing practical and systemic barriers to accessing Perinatal services and supporting health equity across Wales.

## **3.0 Objective**

Following this procedure will help PTHB Maternity Services to:

- Ensure equitable access to urgent maternity care for all women.
- Reduce delays in care caused by language or communication barriers.
- Improve communication between women and maternity staff through appropriate use of interpretation services.
- Align with national recommendations on reducing inequalities in

- maternity outcomes.
- Collect and analyse data to monitor service utilisation and outcomes.

## **4.0 -Definitions**

List definitions e.g.

- PTHB – Powys Teaching Health Board
- BSL – British Sign Language
- OTL – Operational Team Lead
- DGH – District General Hospital

## **5.0 Roles & Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Head of Midwifery and Sexual Health**

The Head of Midwifery and Sexual Health must:

- Ensure all staff read and understand this procedure
- Arrange regular review to monitor compliance with this procedure

### **5.2 Assistant Head of Midwifery**

The Assistant Head of Midwifery and Sexual Health Services has responsibility for:

- Ensuring dissemination of this document to all relevant staff

### **5.3 Bronze operational team lead (OTL)**

The OTL has responsibility for:

- Ensuring compliance with this document by the teams that they manage
- Be available to support with operational and clinical advice when required
- To support their teams in giving out the Open Access to Triage Card and documents when required

### **5.4 Consultant Midwife**

The consultant midwife has responsibility for:

- Supporting implementation of this document
- Reviewing any new evidence or guidance that is produced that may influence the service
- Communicating any key changes in advice that might influence service provision to the Midwifery Leadership and Management team for consideration.

- Being available in an advisory capacity related to care outside of guidance

## **5.5 Women and Children's Risk and Governance Lead**

The Women and Children's Risk and Governance Lead have responsibility for:

- Monitoring and review of incidents in relation to content of this document
- Consulting with District General Hospitals (DGH) to feedback where care has fallen outside of this procedure

## **5.6 Midwives**

Midwives have responsibility for:

- Reading and being familiar with contents of this document
- Identifying women eligible to use the Open Access to Triage System
- Counselling women at booking who are eligible for the Open Access to Triage System and confirm understanding
- Providing the Open Access to Maternity Triage Card and documents to women who can access the service
- Creating a digital referral on the electronic patient record for Open Access to Maternity Triage
- Use interpretation services for families with language and BSL needs.
- Document all communication contact in the digital maternity record.

## **6.0 Open Access to Maternity Triage Procedure**

### **6.1 Eligibility**

Midwives must identify women at booking for the Open Access to Maternity Triage system

- Do not speak English, or
- Require support in British Sign Language (BSL).

### **6.2 Counselling**

Midwives must counsel women appropriately at the booking appointment via an interpreter and confirm understanding of the Open Access to Maternity Triage and provide the following information:

- The purpose of the Open Access to Maternity Triage System and how it operates
- The gestation they can access the maternity triage (this will be specific to the allocated/nearest hospital)

- Provide the location of the maternity triage at the allocated hospital and the address
- Give directions of how to access the maternity triage at the allocated hospital
- Service availability – they can attend 24/7
- Reasons to attend the maternity triage (Appendix B – BSOTS criteria and picture cards)
- They will be triaged on arrival and there may be a wait to be seen

### **6.3 Documentation**

Once the woman has been counselled, complete the following for documentation:

- Provide the woman with the Open Access to Maternity Triage Card and the accompanying Open Access Information Pack (see Appendix A & B).
- Record in the Electronic Patient Record that the woman has been enrolled in the Open Access to Triage Scheme and that the relevant information has been discussed with her.
- Submit a digital referral via the Electronic Patient Record under “PTHB Open Access to Maternity Triage.”
- Add a critical alert in the Electronic Patient Record to clearly identify and highlight the woman’s language and/or communication needs and the DGH she is to attend.

### **7.0 Monitoring and Review**

Data will be collected via the referrals to the ‘Open Access to Maternity Triage’ email box, which will include

- The number of referrals
- Maternity Triage where the woman is having Open Access

### **8.0 Ethnicity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Powys Teaching Health Board Maternity Services is committed to:

- The elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination
- The active promotion of equality of opportunities; for women and their families and our workforce
- The protection of the human rights of women and their families and our workforce
- The promotion of inclusive relationships between groups who share protected characteristics and those who don’t

- The valuing of the diversity inherent in the communities we serve and in our workforce.

The words woman and women have been used throughout this document as this is the way that the majority of those who are pregnant and having a baby will identify. For the purpose of this document, this term includes girls. It also includes people whose gender identity does not correspond with their birth sex or who may have a non-binary identity. As the care provider it is important to refer to birthing people by whichever name and pronouns they wish to use.

When translation services are required, there is the expectation that a face-to-face translator or digital interpretation services will be provided at every contact. The Language Line App is available to all maternity staff to use for this purpose. Consideration is required with documents and leaflets to be provided in a woman's preferred or 1st language. Where possible, efforts should be made to assign Welsh speaking families to Welsh speaking staff.

For further support and advice contact PTHB Equality Team:  
powys.equalityandwelsh@wales.nhs.uk

## **9.0 References / Bibliography**

Mat 103 – Communication Pathways in Maternity Services SOP  
[wisdom.nhs.wales/health-board-guidelines/powys-gudelines/mat-103-communication-pathways-in-maternity-services-sop/?ts=1774963317024](https://wisdom.nhs.wales/health-board-guidelines/powys-gudelines/mat-103-communication-pathways-in-maternity-services-sop/?ts=1774963317024)

**Version Control:**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Summary of Changes/Amendments</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>
1	Initial Issue	02/06/2026

**Engagement & Consultation**

**Key Individuals/Groups Involved in Developing this Document**

(remove those not applicable)

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
<i>Nursing, Quality, Women and Family Health</i>	31/03/2026	Powys Midwives

**Task & Finish Group Members**

(complete where applicable)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>

## Equality Impact Assessment

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed		NO
Name of the person giving this response	E.Doman	
If NO:	EIA already complete as part of MAT 103 – Communication Pathways in Maternity Service SOP for Open Access to Maternity Triage	
If YES:	Attach EIA as an appendix to this documents	

### Procedure Approval Route

(include all stages of approval remove those not applicable)

Name	When	Outcome
Powys Midwives	31/03/2026	Consultation period
Maternity Guidelines Group	05/05/2026	Sent to W&CH guidelines
W&CH Policies & Procedures Governance Group	19/05/2026	Approved

## APPENDICIES



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd  
Addysgu Powys  
Powys Teaching  
Health Board

### A – Open Access to Maternity Triage Card



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd  
Addysgu Powys  
Powys Teaching  
Health Board

**Mynediad Agored  
i Gwasanaethau  
Mamolaeth**

**Open Access  
to Maternity  
Services**

**Enw / Name**

**Dyddiad dyledus / My due date**

**Dewis iaith / Preferred language**

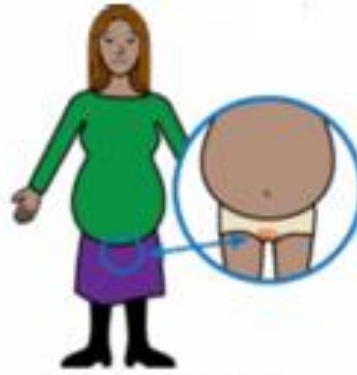
**Cyfeiriwch fi i'r adran famolaeth. Efallai y bydd angen cyfieithydd arna i i fy helpu gyda'r cyfeiriadau i'r adran famolaeth**  
**Please direct me to the maternity department. I might need an interpreter to help me with directions.**

**B – Open Access to Maternity Triage Resources**

# Open Access to Maternity Triage Signs and Symptoms



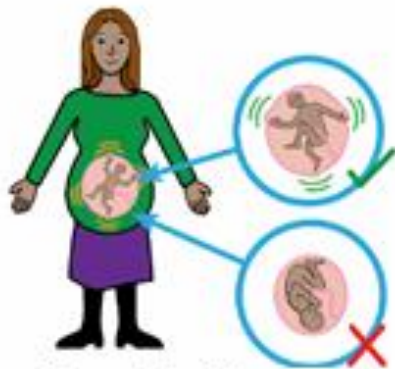
**abdominal pain**



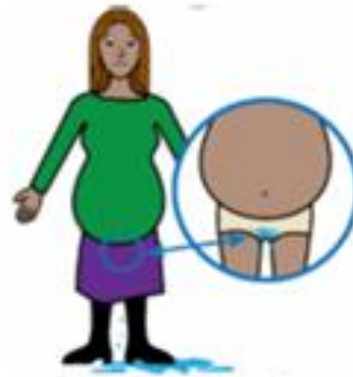
**Antenatal bleeding**



**Headache**



**Altered fetal Movements**



**Rupture of membranes**



**Unwell or other**



**Suspected labour**



**Postnatal**

# Open Access to Maternity Triage

## Maternity Triage Location

**hospital**



**ADDRESS**

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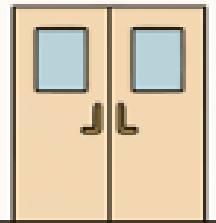
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**TRAVEL TIME TO HOSPITAL**

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**MATERNITY  
TRIAGE**



**MATERNITY TRIAGE LOCATION  
24/7 ACCESS**

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**HELP!**  
**SHOW YOUR CARD TO A MEMBER  
OF STAFF IF YOU ARE LOST**